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From Page:
5
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Iowa Great Places accepts city's application

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of the Muscatine Journal

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Muscatine has taken the next step to becoming one of the first cities in the Iowa Great Places program.

Gary Carlson, president and CEO of the Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Tuesday at Muscatine's Community Improvement Action Team (CIAT) meeting that the city's application to the program has been accepted by the state. Along with Muscatine, a total of 145 cities have applied and waiting to work with state-assigned coaches to sell their city in hopes of becoming one of the three pilot programs. The pilot programs will serve as the model for expansion of the program.

Carlson said the city expected to meet with team coaches in August.

The Iowa Great Places program, administered by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, is intended to help stimulate ideas and planning, provide greater access to state resources, help leverage local and private resources, and share technical expertise. A public forum on the program was held in Muscatine

in May, along with nine others across the state.

The Iowa Great Places Web site, at www.iowagreatplaces.gov, lists the characteristics of a Great Place as one that has a unique sense of place, rich social fabric, vital economy, pleasing environment, strong foundation and creative culture, and provides an engaging experience.

Other business

CIAT members discussed possible fund-raising options for the Pearl of the Mississippi Project Phase II. The second phase of the project will focus on the riverfront, with new public art, landscaping, benches and a water feature. 250 letters seeking funds have already been sent out, and \$17,570 had been raised as of Monday July 18. The project, which is expected to cost \$1.1 million, already has pledges of \$800,000 from local corporations.

Group members discussed the possibility of having a restaurant fund-raising night, during which 10 percent of the profits of one day's business from participating Muscatine restaurants would be donated to the project.

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